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Sen. Allen's legislation to help promote tourism, northern Michigan businesses passed by Senate

LANSING – Legislation allowing tourism-related businesses to display directional signs was unanimously passed by the Senate Tuesday, announced Sen. Jason Allen, R-Traverse City.

“Many of Michigan’s most beautiful gems are off the beaten path,” Allen said. “Tourists who are looking to enjoy the beauty of northern Michigan rely on the directional signs to find their way.”

Senate Bill 735, sponsored by Allen, allows for the erection of tourist-oriented directional signs within the jurisdiction of a local unit of government, if approved by the local governing body. The bill was amended on the Senate floor to allow for additional local control.

Allen sponsored the legislation after learning about difficulties the Mallard Golf Course owners Arnold and David Smith were facing. According to David Smith, the one summer they had a directional sign their business increased.

The city of East Jordan approved the erection of a directional sign, however, the Smiths were later informed by the department of transportation that the sign was against the law. The golf course, which is located on M-66, depends heavily upon tourists.

Under the bill, operators of tourist-based businesses would be allowed to have signs erected if they are allowed by local ordinance. Once approved at the local level, businesses would still apply to the Michigan Department of Transportation for a permit to erect a tourism-related directional sign.

“I am pleased by the strong bi-partisan support of this legislation in the Senate,” Allen said. “This legislation will greatly expand the opportunities local governments have to promote tourism in northern Michigan.”

SB 735 will now go before the House of Representatives for consideration.

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